

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
August 10 - 16, 2012

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1. [Panetta: Iran Increases Support to Assad Regime](#) (08-14-2012)

By Nick Simeone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 14, 2012 – Iran is increasing its presence in Syria, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said today, through apparent efforts to bolster the Bashar Assad regime by training a militia and other tactics.

“There’s now indications that they’re trying to develop or trying to train a militia within Syria to be able to fight on behalf of the regime,” Panetta said at a Pentagon news briefing. “So we are seeing a growing presence by Iran and that is of deep concern to us.”

The secretary said he hopes Iran thinks again about how much it wants to get involved in Syria. “The Syrian people ought to determine their future, not Iran,” he said.

Iran’s interference is adding to the killing in Syria, Panetta said, and “tries to bolster a regime that we think, ultimately, is going to come down.”

The secretary noted the increasing number of defections and problems within the Syrian military as further signs of collapse. Assad’s former prime minister, Riyad Farid Hijab, fled the country last week and a number of key generals have defected in recent months, as well.

Speaking alongside Panetta at the briefing, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the 18-month uprising is taking an obvious toll on the Syrian army.

“I actually think that’s why Iran is stepping in to form this militia, to take some of the pressure off of the Syrian military,” Dempsey said.

The fighting, Dempsey said, has left pro-Assad forces with resupply and morale problems. “Any army would be taxed with that kind of pace,” he said.

Panetta said U.S. efforts to end Assad’s rule are being worked primarily through diplomatic channels, with a focus on ensuring the security of Syria’s chemical and biological weapons as well as providing humanitarian aid to refugees and non-lethal aid to the opposition.

The Defense Department plans for “a number of contingencies,” Panetta said, but any notion of establishing a no-fly zone over Syria, as some rebels have called for, is “not a front-burner issue for us.”

Still, he said, “we are prepared to be able to respond to whatever the president of the United States asks us to do.”

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[Leon E. Panetta](#)

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[Panetta, Dempsey Reassured By Talks with New Egyptian Leaders](#)

2. U.S. Lifts Sanctions on Syrian Ex–Prime Minister Riyad Hijab (08-14-2012)

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — The U.S. government has lifted its sanctions against former Syrian Prime Minister Riyad Hijab, who recently defected from the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

“This action is being taken because Hijab is no longer a senior official of the government of Syria,” a statement from the Treasury Department said August 14. The Treasury action removes Hijab’s name from the list of “blocked persons” and his assets are no longer subject to being put under “freeze,” the statement said.

The U.S. government urges other high Syrian officials, both political and military, to take “similarly courageous steps” to sever their ties with the Assad regime and “stand with the Syrian people.” Since the Syrian uprising began in March 2011, the United States has used a variety of tools to target and sanction senior Syrian officials and Syrians who have perpetrated human rights abuses.

Treasury Under Secretary David Cohen said the measures are having the desired effect. “Recent civilian and military defections from the Assad regime are further indications that the government is crumbling and losing its grip on power,” Cohen said. Hijab and 28 other members of the Syrian government were placed on the U.S. sanctions list July 18, three weeks before Hijab’s defection to Jordan.

Speaking to reporters in Amman August 14, Hijab said, "The regime is collapsing morally, materially and economically. Militarily, it is crumbling, as it no longer occupies more than 30 percent of Syrian territory." He pledged his support for the opposition.

The Treasury statement said, "It is not too late for others who continue to provide support to the Assad regime to sever their ties and be relieved of the burden of sanctions."

3. U.S. Hopes Egyptian Civilian, Military Leaders Work Together (08-13-2012)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 13, 2012 – U.S. defense officials were expecting Egypt's new president to name his own defense team and hope civilian and military leaders can work together to address the country's problems, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said today.

Egyptian President Muhammad Morsi announced yesterday that the head of military intelligence, Gen. Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi, would replace Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi as defense minister and leader of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. The council effectively led Egypt after last year's fall of President Hosni Mubarak until Morsi took office in June.

Morsi is the first democratically elected leader in Egypt's history.

The president also replaced army chief of staff Gen. Sami Hafez Anan and the leaders of the navy, air force and air defense branch.

"It's important for both the military and civilians leaders in Egypt to work together to address the economic and security challenges facing that country," Little said. "We had expected President Morsi to coordinate changes in the military leadership. The United States and the Department of Defense, in particular, look forward to continuing a very close relationship with the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces."

U.S. officials know General Sisi, Little said. "He comes from within the ranks of the SCAF, and we believe we will be able to continue the strong partnership that we have with Egypt," he added.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta has not spoken to the new defense minister, "but looks forward to doing so at the earliest possible moment," Little said.

Egyptian officials said the 76-year old Tantawi retired, but would continue to serve as a presidential advisor.

Biographies:
[George Little](#)

4. Preparing for a New Syria (08-12-2012) **Secretary Clinton, Turkish Foreign Minister on Syria**

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Foreign Minister Davutoglu after their Meeting August 11, 2012, Conrad Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey

FOREIGN MINISTER DAVUTOGLU: (Via translator.) Today (inaudible) Her Excellency, the Secretary of State of America, Ms. Hillary Clinton. This is the (inaudible) time that she (inaudible) visit to -- the second time that we were able to visit together. (Inaudible) and anti-terrorism, and she (inaudible). Recently we also attended United Nations initiatives in Paris and Geneva.

Today we came together again in order to (inaudible) recent developments, particularly within the conflict with Syria. Some very important developments took place concerning Syria there recently (inaudible). Unfortunately, the transition plan that we (inaudible) Geneva (inaudible), unfortunately, and diplomatic activities were interrupted significantly.

(Inaudible) international community efforts in order to (inaudible) contribute to peace-building process in the Middle East. However, the resignation of Kofi Annan had negative repercussions on the diplomatic efforts in the region. And the humanitarian situation in the Middle East and Syria, particularly, is not very promising. Now we have more than 55,000 refugees (inaudible) in Turkey. And every day 3,000 refugees want to enter from Turkish borders. We always want to open our doors to our Syrian brothers and sisters, and we have been mobilizing our resources in order to help them as much as we can. But this increasing number of refugees is a clear indicator of the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Syria. And we expect that broader collaboration on the part of the international community in order to resolve this issue.

As long as the Syrian conflict continues, the humanitarian situation will deteriorate even further. So, as soon as possible, we need to take decisive steps in order to stop the deterioration of humanitarian conditions in Syria. What is going on in Aleppo is particularly very sad. The air strikes do not only cause humanitarian but also social and historical damage. So the international community needs to take some very decisive steps in order to stop it. And we talked about (inaudible) Ms. Hillary Clinton. The transition process in Syria needs to be completed as soon as possible. And there should be no room for power vacuum in the transition process, because terrorist organizations like PKK will try to benefit from a possible power vacuum. That is why we need to take joint efforts in order to prevent the power vacuum from being formed.

We will take up some joint efforts, of course, under the leadership of the United States of America. We will closely follow the developments in Syria and in the broader region. And we will keep evaluating the situation on the ground. In the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council, and as friends of Syria, we will also take some steps in the future. We talked about (inaudible) as well. We will look at the reality on the ground, international aid, and also the humanitarian situation. So, Ms. Clinton's visit is indeed a very timely one. And from that one we will also keep following the situation together through conference calls and through delegations.

We also talked about (inaudible) Egyptian soldiers, which is a very sad development. And Syria has also problems with its neighbors right now, like Tunisia.

And I would like to say welcome to Ms. Hillary Clinton again. The floor is yours.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much, Minister. And again, it is a great pleasure for me to be here in Istanbul. I want to begin by expressing my condolences for the injuries and loss of life sustained in the PKK's vicious attack on a Turkish military bus two days ago.

I want to thank you for the opportunity for these consultations. Since the Friends of Syrian People met over a month ago in Paris, the crisis has deepened significantly. As the opposition has gained strength, the regime has responded with brutal violence. Even many of the regime's previous supporters are now distancing themselves and there have been a series of high-level defections. The

United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning the Assad regime and calling for a peaceful political transition. Unfortunately, Russia and China blocked needed action in the Security Council.

Today we met to discuss what the United States and Turkey can do together, along with our international partners and our friends inside and outside of Syria, to respond to this growing humanitarian and political crisis. In particular, we had detailed conversations about three urgent priorities. First, supporting the opposition and their efforts to end the violence and begin the transition to a free and democratic Syria without Assad. The United States continues to provide the opposition with communications equipment and other forms of non-lethal assistance and direct financial assistance. We are coordinating our efforts with others who are also providing various forms of support.

Today we compared notes between the American and Turkish teams on support for the opposition, developing a common operational picture, and discussing how we can enhance our collaboration between ourselves and along with others to hasten the end of the violence.

As we work to help the opposition inside Syria, we are continuing to increase pressure from outside. Yesterday in Washington we announced sanctions designed to expose and disrupt the links between Iran, Hezbollah, and Syria that prolonged the life of the Assad regime. We urge other governments to support our sanctions with additional actions of their own.

Second, even as we seek to hasten Assad's fall, we are also responding to the massive emergency humanitarian crisis that he has caused. United Nations estimates that approximately two million people inside Syria need assistance, and more than 140,000 others have fled to Syria's neighbors. As you heard the minister say, around 50,000 to 55,000 of them are here in Turkey, and more are likely on the way.

I have to thank the government and the people of Turkey for your very generous hospitality to these men, women, and children who are fleeing for safety. Turkey has literally not only opened your borders, but your arms and your hearts.

And just now the minister and I met with a small group of Syrian women living in the Turkish camps. I have been in many meetings with refugees. I never have been in a meeting where all of the refugees uniformly praised their host government for the wonderful reception and support they have received. We heard their terrible stories. One woman fled after the regime's forces burned down her village. Another came after they broke into her home, beat her and her children. And I simply cannot say enough about what Turkey is doing to support the victims of this unrelenting cruelty. The government is providing Syrians in the Turkish camps with shelter, food, access to health and education services at a very great financial cost.

As the need continues to grow, so does our response. Today I am announcing we plan to contribute an additional \$5 million to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and \$500,000 to the International Organization for Migration to support displaced Syrians inside Turkey. With these contributions, the United States is now providing nearly \$82 million for food, emergency healthcare, blankets, hygiene kits, and other humanitarian relief.

Now, no one can predict how soon this regime will finally be brought to an end. But we know the day will come. So our third urgent task is to prepare for what comes next. The Syrian people will, of course, and must leave the transition, and they will need to maintain the integrity of the state's political institutions. They will need to stabilize and eventually rebuild their economy to establish

security, safeguard, and eventually destroy the country's most dangerous weapons, including its chemical weapons. They will need to protect the rights of all Syrians, regardless of religion, gender, or ethnicity. And they will need to address the ongoing human and humanitarian challenges. All of this will need careful planning and support from the international community.

Last month major opposition groups came together in Cairo to voice their support for a detailed transition plan and a vision of Syria that is united, pluralistic, and democratic. They have since begun to rally support for this plan inside Syria. Today we consulted with each other on how we can all support that plan and, at the same time, prepare for a range of contingencies. From here, we will engage other partners as we get ready for the upcoming international meetings in the coming weeks.

I also met with a group of activists -- legal experts, journalists, student leaders -- to hear about their efforts, and to discuss what more the United States can do to support them.

And finally, we again expressed our solidarity with Turkey in confronting the PKK terrorists, and our condolences to the families of those who have fallen to such cowardly attacks. We share Turkey's determination that Syria must not become a haven for PKK terrorists, whether now or after the departure of the Assad regime.

Now, I think it is important to state that we have a difficult road ahead us, but the real difficulty is for the Syrian people themselves. But in each of the areas I have mentioned, and so much more, Turkey is a leader. And we are proud that Turkey is our partner.

I thank the minister once again for his efforts to help the Syrian people. I am looking forward to discussing this and other issues with the prime minister and president later this afternoon. But again, let me thank you for these very important consultations at such a critical time.

FOREIGN MINISTER DAVUTOGLU: Thank you.

MODERATOR: We will take a few questions and then (inaudible).

QUESTION: Madam Secretary, for you, can you tell us a little bit more in detail about your meeting with the opposition activists? Did you get a better sense of whether they are really prepared to be able to be involved in leading a transition? What kind of questions did you ask them about who is actually doing the fighting on the ground? And what kind of answers did you get?

And then, for both of you, there has been a lot of talk about this common operational picture. What exactly is that common operational picture? Does it involve the potential of this corridor from Aleppo, north to the border here, turning into some kind of safe haven? And does it include anything on how to deal with the chemical weapons that everyone has expressed concern about? Thank you.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, first, with respect to the activists with whom I met, I listened carefully to their descriptions of what each was doing. One young man had just come out of Aleppo, and was intending to return. They, to a person -- there were both men and women there -- are committed to a pluralistic, democratic, inclusive Syria. And each is doing his or her part.

There is work going on about telling the story. There is no free media inside Syria, as there is, very evidently, here in Turkey. So how does the story get out in an authoritative way?

And another talking about the work being done on justice and accountability, documenting the abuses that are occurring so that there will be no impunity when there finally is a new government and a new opportunity for the Syrian people to hold those who perpetrated these abuses accountable.

A lot of attention, particularly from the women, to what is happening to women inside Syria, the abuses that they are subjected to by the regime, the need for women to be partners in a new Syria, to be heard and to participate as they try to form the basis for a transition.

We heard from the representatives of the students who are still peacefully protesting on university campuses and trying to organize and support the opposition. There was concern expressed about the apparent lack of unity among the outside opposition and a hope that, as one young man said, the opposition will rise to the occasion and be able to present a unified front, both inside and outside of Syria, going forward.

We heard firsthand, as I said, from the young man who had just been in Aleppo about the tremendous courage of those who are withstanding the assaults from tanks and aircraft, and how important it is to work for ways to support those on the ground without making the suffering worse. There is a very clear understanding about the need to end this conflict quickly, but not doing it in a way that produces even more deaths, injuries, and destruction.

So, I came away very impressed by these young activists, and very committed to increasing the assistance we are already providing. Several of those present have already received support from the United States. As you know, we are providing \$25 million in non-lethal aid, mostly communications, to civil society and activists. And I don't want to go into any further details as to how we are helping people, at the risk of endangering them at this time.

Regarding the planning, what the minister and I agreed to today was to have very intensive operational planning. We have been closely coordinating over the course of this conflict. But now we need to get into the real details of such operational planning. And it needs to be across both of our governments. Certainly our two ministries are coordinating much of it. But our intelligence services, our military, have very important responsibilities and roles to play. So we are going to be setting up a working group to do exactly that.

And both the minister and I saw eye to eye on the many tasks that are ahead of us, and the kinds of contingencies that we have to plan for, including the one you mentioned in the horrible event that chemical weapons were used. And everyone has made it clear to the Syrian regime that is a red line for the world, what would that mean in terms of response and humanitarian and medical emergency assistance, and of course, what needs to be done to secure those stocks from every being used, or from falling into the wrong hands.

FOREIGN MINISTER DAVUTOGLU: (Via translator.) Concerning our joint efforts, Ms. Clinton already informed extensively. There are two main focal points for us. One the one hand, again, some possible worst-case scenarios. We are going to be (inaudible) to plan how we are going to react as the international community and as United States of America and Turkey.

Recent developments in Aleppo have shown that a gigantic wave of migration can result from all these atrocities. And there might also be some groups who might try to benefit from a possible power vacuum. And we have seen signs of this recently in certain regions in Syria. And another potential threat is the chemical weapons, as we have already mentioned. So, against all the possible

worst case scenarios, we decided to work together and of course include some other international actors as well.

If there is a huge wave of refugee migration, then we need to maybe establish a mechanism within Syria in order to ensure humanitarian protection. Of course, we might try to protect people if they seek refuge in our territory. But they have to (inaudible) bombardment every day in Syrian territory. If they are exposed to air strikes every day and bombardments every day, this might even be considered war crime. So, in such a case, an international community can no longer keep its silence, and there are certain measures that need to be taken up, in addition to UN-level negotiations.

Turkey is putting utmost effort in order to ensure the protection of Syrian people. Turkey and the United States of America have been working in a coordinated manner already, but we need to brace for impact. So we need to focus on more practical, more pragmatic, and to-the-point solutions. This is the decision that we have taken.

And after the transition period, a new Syria will emerge. And we will have to establish law and order and public order in that new Syria. We need to ensure that the transition is a smooth one, and there will be no room for ethnic conflicts in Syria. So we need to prepare for this future Syria today, as international community, in order not to encounter some unpleasant surprises in the future. So we need to be ready for any possible crisis, and we need to prepare for the future of Syria.

We had already been working in a coordinated manner with United States of America. But now our coordination will become even more systematized and structured. Today's meeting has been a very fruitful one in order to lay the foundation for this.

QUESTION: Hi. (Inaudible.) Madam Secretary, you mentioned you met Syrians this morning. But Syrians I have spoken to inside or outside Syria are extremely frustrated with international -- what they see as the international community's lack of response. And they basically feel left alone at this point.

You talked about non-lethal aid. You talked about post -- day-after planning. You talked about helping refugees. But in terms of given that Aleppo is being bombarded, and given that there is a huge suffering inside major cities and about roughly over 100 people die every day, have you also discussed actionable, tangible steps, whether it is safety zones, no-fly zones, Security Council resolutions, or other forms of assistance that could impact their day-to-day life?

And quickly, I wanted to follow up, if you don't mind, just -- there is a good deal of anxiety in Turkish public about the Kurdish presence and potential PKK presence in the northern parts of Syria. In your assessment, is this something that concerns you? And, you know, have you looked into the PKK presence or power? And what is your assessment on that? Thank you.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you. As to your first question, the issues you posed within your question are exactly the ones that the minister and I have agreed need greater in-depth analysis. It is one thing to talk about all kinds of potential actions. But you cannot make reasoned decisions without doing intense analysis and operational planning. And we share not only the frustration, but the anger and outrage of the Syrian people at what this regime continues to do. But we also are well aware that its brutality seems to know no bounds. And there is no -- you know, there is no doubt in the minds of the minister or myself that anything we do should be to hasten and lessen bloodshed, not to catalyze even greater and more horrible kinds of assaults.

So, really doing contingency planning, sorting this out, is what we have agreed to do. We have a very long list that we have gone through this morning on all kinds of issues, both before the inevitable fall of Assad and after. But we have to be very careful, and we have to do it in a way that always keeps in mind our goal, number one, is to hasten the end of the bloodshed and the Assad regime. That is our strategic goal. And we have to analyze everything against that goal. And then, of course, we want to be good partners in helping the Syrian people build the kind of democratic, pluralistic society and government that will respect human rights and restore a better future. So, this is how we are proceeding.

Regarding the PKK, let me just underscore that the United States remains strongly committed to the defense of our Turkish ally. Together we are working to root out violence extremism and to address the many regional security issues we face. And amongst those we stand firmly with Turkey against the PKK.

Now, your question was is there reason to worry about enhanced PKK activity arising out of the vacuum created by violence and the brutality of the regime within Syria, and the answer is yes. We worry about terrorists, PKK, al-Qaeda, and others taking advantage of the legitimate fight of the Syrian people for their freedom to use Syria to promote their own agendas, and even to perhaps find footholds to launch attacks against others.

So, we are absolutely committed to supporting Turkey against the PKK, and we will do so in any way that protects Turkey and the people of this nation from this kind of terrorism.

FOREIGN MINISTER DAVUTOGLU: (Speaks in Turkish.)

[Secretary Clinton: Travel to Turkey](#)
[Additional Humanitarian Assistance for Those Fleeing the Violence in Syria](#)

5. Panetta: New Marine Officers Will Add to Legacy of Excellence (08-10-2012)

By Karen Parrish
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 10, 2012 – Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta offered congratulations and a challenge to a group of newly minted Marine Corps officers during a commissioning ceremony today at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, Va.

“It is now your turn ... to take up this mantle of responsibility as leaders in the Marine Corps – to preserve our military strength and to uphold the honor and reputation of your uniform,” Panetta told the 120-plus recent graduates of Marine Corps Officer Candidates School at Quantico, Va. “In wearing the eagle, globe and anchor, always remember that you have set yourself apart. Remember that you are expected to abide by the highest standards, to display the strongest character, and to demonstrate the utmost integrity in all you do.”

The secretary noted eight of the new second lieutenants served as enlisted Marines before completing the 10-week school that admitted them to the officer ranks.

“You’ve already served as enlisted Marines, and some of you have seen combat,” Panetta told them. “So you know first-hand the sacrifice and discipline that the Marine Corps is all about, and I commend you for shouldering the new responsibility of a Marine officer.”

He noted the course included the hottest July on record in the United States, and told the new second lieutenants OCS may well have been the longest and most challenging 2 1/2 months of their lives.

“You’ve been up before sunrise; you’ve collapsed exhausted onto your rack after dark,” Panetta said. “I’m sure that each of you had moments – as you were low-crawling through the mud, carrying a heavy pack, or running in boots with blisters on your feet – when you wondered just what the hell you had gotten yourself into.”

Nearly a third of the men and women enrolled in the class didn’t finish, the secretary said.

“But you proved to yourselves, and you proved to others, that you can fight through pain and frustration, and that you can endure what most people cannot,” he said. “You’ll need that self-confidence, you will need that discipline, as you step forward to lead the Fleet Marine Force and our military.”

Panetta told the new officers he has been privileged to work with a number of extraordinary Marine Corps officers: Gen. James F. Amos, 35th commandant of the Marine Corps; Gen. James N. Mattis, commander of U.S. Central Command; Gen. John R. Allen, commander of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan; and Gen. John F. Kelly, the secretary’s senior military assistant, who will soon assume leadership of U.S. Southern Command.

Those officers, he said, carry on a Marine Corps legacy “of grit and sheer determination, of taking the fight to the enemy on far-flung shores, and of fighting like hell – especially when the odds are long.”

Across generations, Marines have added to that legacy, from Tripoli to the Pacific islands and Korea to Vietnam, Panetta said.

“During this past decade of war, our nation has depended on Marines to confront determined enemies and threats around the world,” he said. “And we’ll never forget – never forget -- the more than 1,400 Marines who’ve paid the ultimate price for our country since 9/11.”

In Iraq and now Afghanistan, Marines have led some of the fiercest fighting over more than a decade of conflict, he said.

“Right now, as we speak, night has fallen in Sangin District of Helmand,” Panetta added. “The enemy may be resting, but you can be damn sure the Marines are not. They’re taking the fight to the Taliban every day, every night; helping their Afghan brothers take the lead for security so that Afghanistan can secure and govern itself and never again become a safe haven for al-Qaida.”

The secretary thanked the families and friends of today’s new officers, and recognized service members and veterans attending the event. Panetta also praised the company and platoon commanders, sergeant instructors and OCS staff who trained the new lieutenants.

“While members of this class may not have fully appreciated it while doing push-ups or marching on the parade field, you have given them lessons that they will call upon for years to come,” the secretary told them.

“Most of all, let me thank this graduating class,” he said. “Thank you for choosing to serve our country. Thank you for your willingness to step forward and ... put your lives on the line in order to protect this country and in order to defend your fellow Americans.”

Biographies:

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6. Rice Presses for Resolution of Sudan–South Sudan Conflict (08-10-2012)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The Obama administration welcomes recent agreements between Sudan and South Sudan on sharing oil revenues and permitting humanitarian access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile, but says both sides need to understand that the African Union and the United Nations Security Council are “dead serious” about these agreements being implemented.

Speaking at the Security Council in New York August 9, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice said the United States supports and has commended the oil revenue agreement, which she described as “an important and encouraging step” that will bring economic benefits to both countries.

Likewise, the agreement to allow humanitarian access in South Kordofan and Blue Nile “is also encouraging” and needs to be fully and faithfully implemented, “given the gravity of the humanitarian situation and its rapid deterioration” in both areas, she said.

But Rice said it remains to be seen if either agreement will have full compliance.

“The reality is we have seen agreements in the past that have been signed on paper and never implemented on the ground,” she said, and both sides are risking consequences from the international community.

“The two parties must understand that the African Union and the United Nations Security Council are dead serious about implementation of their decisions and resolutions. ... In the case of the Security Council, we’ve made very clear under Chapter VII that these are binding obligations and failure to comply could well result in consequences from this council on either or both parties,” Rice said.

She urged both sides to return to the negotiating table to resolve their remaining issues, and said it is “vitally important” for them to complete the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2046, which calls for a comprehensive settlement of their conflict, including determining the status of Abyei and other disputed areas, security along their border, and demilitarization.

“There are many outstanding issues, including those in the African Union Roadmap and Resolution 2046, that remain unresolved, unaddressed, unimplemented,” Rice said.

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The Security Council is realistic on how much more time could be needed, but it attaches great urgency to resolving the conflict, she said.

“We are very clear that the two parties have to move quickly. This council is reviewing the issue ... every two weeks. The African Union is very much focused on the urgency of this, and together we intend to hold the parties' feet to the fire,” Rice said.
